

new life. She bade fair to become a great maritime power. She made her influence forcibly felt in European politics. She set up her first printing press—that of Chapman and Myllar—in 1507. She multiplied her grammar schools, and provided a third University—that of Aberdeen—in addition to St Andrews and Glasgow. She attracted foreign merchants, and made a brave effort to strike out in a new course of industrial activity. She laid the foundation of the union of her crown with that of England. In James IV. she had a king who was keenly receptive to the new energy of the age, and if he had been wise enough not to risk a battle at Flodden he might have lived to see his kingdom a power of the first rank.

His tragic death was a terrible check to his country's progress. A long eclipse veiled the brightness of the early morning of modern Scotland. Yet this long interval of eclipse was one of the most fruitful of progress in Scottish history. Out of it was slowly evolved the reformation, and the reformation changed the destiny of Scotland. Politically, as well as ecclesiastically, it made a clean breach with the past. In snapping the bond that bound the nation to the mediaeval Church, the reformers broke the old Franco-Scottish alliance and forged the link of alliance with England. Still more important, from our point of view, in asserting their principles, despite the antagonism of their sovereign, they did not hesitate to go the length of revolution, and drive that sovereign from both throne and country. They thus went far beyond their neighbours across the Border in the vindication of both religious and political principles. They outdid all the nations of Western Europe, with the exception of little Holland, in their championship of the right of resistance to arbitrary rule on grounds of conscience and political right alike. The movement which culminated in this consummation has for us an absorbing interest. It was the work of many factors, various minds—the work of preacher, thinker, scholar, martyr, publicist, statesman.

The first to play a part—though an indirect one—in its early stage was John Major. Major, or Mair, was born in 1469 near Haddington, "the town," as he tells us himself, "which fostered the beginnings of my own studies." He